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ABSTRACT

Communication and sexism are analyzed from a systemic perspective, illustrating how sexism is perpetuated through sexist interaction and symbol systems. Sexism is shown to be a disease in our society, which creates a societal situation with double-binding sex-role symbols which limit our adaptability. A remedy for sexism is suggested which recognizes the systemic properties of communication systems. (Author/AA)

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A Systemic Perspective of Communication and Sexism

Sexism is a communicable social disease. Sexism is "communicable" because it is spread and perpetuated through communication. Sexism is "social" because sexist interaction[1] systems are interdependent with society's symbol systems and because both sexist interaction and symbol systems have become institutionalized as societal norms. Sexism is a "disease" because present sexist interaction and symbol systems (1) are autonomous (self-maintaining, out of our immediate control), (2) place people in the maladjustive situation of the double bind, and (3) limit people's adaptability. A possible method for remedying sexism is through communication.

General system theory is a useful approach to sexism since the perpetuation and potential remedy of sexism is through a system of communicative behaviors (interaction systems and symbol systems manifested in interaction systems). Therefore, a brief preliminary discussion of general system theory and its specific application to communication[2] is useful in establishing the framework through which sexism will be viewed.

Theoretical Perspective

Hall and Fagen define a system as ". . . a set of objects together with relationships between the objects and between their attributes."[3] Communication exists as a system: its set of objects is the communicative behavior of the participants; the attributes of these behaviors classify the interaction. These communicative behaviors, together with relationships between the behaviors and between the attributes of the behaviors, ultimately serve to define a relationship between the communicants. Such communication systems (or interaction systems) are referred to by Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson: "Interaction systems, then, shall be two or more communicants in the process of, or at the level of, defining the nature of their relationship."[4]

Three inseparable characteristics of all systems are structure (spacial attributes), function (time attributes), and evolution (change in structure and function over long periods of time). The concepts of structure, function, and evolution contribute to the "global laws" of systems. "Global laws," according to Mandelbaum, ". . .are about the properties of systems, attempting to show how these systems change over time, or how the system as a whole is related to its component parts."[5] Viewing communication as a system, its structure can be discovered by identifying patterns in the interaction; its function can be discovered by viewing time as fluid, multilayered,[6] and varied; its evolution can be discovered by identifying changes in interaction patterns over time. Observing the structure, function, and evolution of an interaction system provides a means for classifying the interaction.

Systems do not exist in a void; they exist in a hierarchy of systems--micro and macro (or environing) systems. The systems dealt with in this article all tend toward being open systems and therefore they have permeable boundries; they interact with their environing systems. Because of this interaction, systems and their environing systems are interdependent. That is,

micro and macrosystems constrain each other. With communication as the level of analysis, the interaction system is the microsystem. The environing system of the interaction is society's symbol system.

The properties of open systems include wholeness, feedback cycles, and equifinality. Wholeness refers to the non-summative nature of the system--the system is different than the sum of its component parts; the relationship between the parts, the gestalt, is inseparable. Because systems are wholistic, their functioning is not appropriately represented by a linear model of causality. Mutual causality (everything can cause everything, including itself) is a more appropriate representation of systems because, since the whole is interdependent and non-summative, any change affects the whole system. Communication, being a relatively open system, is wholistic. Therefore, a systemic analysis of communication focuses on the relationship between the variables rather than on the variables themselves. The communication variables interact in a mutually causal manner.

Feedback allows a system to exist as a system by regulating deviation from the system's present state. Feedback occurs in a cycle or a loop. Open systems are characterized by both negative and positive feedback cycles. Negative feedback cycles counteract deviation from system norms; positive feedback cycles amplify deviation from system norms. In communication, then, variation is measured as deviation from the norm intrinsic to the specific interaction sequences observed. A norm of interaction is an interaction pattern that is redundant. Feedback is a redundant sequence of interaction cycles that counteract or amplify deviation from interaction norms.

A third property of open systems, equifinality, recognizes systems' capacity for self-determination. Because open systems are characterized by mutual causality and are able to interact with their environment, the final state of the system is unpredictable from the system's initial components. Communication is self-determining, equifinal. Antecedent conditions cannot be used to predict communication outcomes. Only short-term communication probabilities can be forecasted.

In summary, communication occurs in a system of behaviors which serves to define a relationship between the communicants. Systemically, communication is characterized by structure, function, evolution, "global laws," hierarchical relation to and interdependence with other systems, wholism, mutual causality, deviation regulated by cyclical feedback, equifinality, and self-determination. This perspective on communication can now be applied to the subject of this article: sexism.

Sexism and Communication in Society

Sexism is perpetuated through communication. In sexist interaction systems, the attributes of the behaviors performed by female communicants may be classified as displaying inferiority; the attributes of the behaviors performed by male communicants may be classified as displaying superiority. For instance, female/inferior, male/superior interaction systems in our society include: a female never beats a male; males always win; females wait

for males to open doors for them; males open doors for females. The present structure of sexist interaction systems functions to define a female/inferior, male/superior relationship. Thus, sexist relationships are manifested in and defined through communication.

The environing system of sexist interaction systems is society. Bertalanffy suggests society can be conceptualized as a system of symbols.[7] Although symbol systems are not observable directly, they are manifested in and defined by interaction systems that are directly observable. The redundancies in the interaction systems of a society can be generalized as being representative of that society's symbol system. Such redundancies in interaction systems serve to integrate elements of behavior, and thus they correspond to what Sheflen terms "programs" of interaction. According to Sheflen, behavior becomes interloced through interaction "programs": "The basic assumption here is that behavior appears in standardized units in any culture because members learn to perform to shape their behaviors into these molds so it is mutually recognizable and predictable."[8] Redundancies in interaction, or interaction "programs," become "institutionalized" as societal norms in the sense described by Parsons.[9] These redundancies meet both of the criteria established by Parsons to qualify as an "instituionalized" standard: (1) "role expectations": the actor shapes her/his behavior to the standardized molds (in the present analysis, standardized sex roles) and (2) "sanctions": the actor's behavior is recognizable and predictable to others, who reciprocate by behaving in an appropriate standardized mold. The redundant expectation and sanction of sex role behavior in our society counteracts deviation from sexist norms. Furthermore, these "institutionalized" interaction "programs" become internalized in society's symbol system, according to Parsons. When "instituionalized" interaction sequences and symbols are integrated into society's formal instituions (government, church, family, business, media) they become semi-permanent.

Sexism may therefore be defined as the instituionalization of interaction and symbol systems based on gender. Behaving toward and symbolizing a person on the basis of that person's gender is sexist. Gender-based interaction and symbols have become instituionalized in our society; our society is sexist. Traditionally, females participate in interaction with behaviors displaying inferiority, such as passive acceptance of male authority and financial dependence on men; males participate in interaction with behaviors displaying superiority, such as decision making and financial supporting. These redundancies in interaction systems (or "programs" of interaction) serve to integrate behavior by making it "mutually recognizable and predictable." From sexist redundancies in interaction systems, the corresponding symbol system can be generalized: females are symbolized as inferior; males are symbolized as superior. Familiar symbols generalized from interaction dealing with authority are: female--"weaker sex," male-- "wears the pants." Interaction dealing with finances is conventionally symbolized as: female--"little women," male--"breadwinner." Interaction and symbol systems are independent. That is people interact according to their symbols, and deviation from the established symbol system is counteracted by redundant interaction systems consistent with the symbol system. For example, females accept male authority because males are symbolized as superior to females; deviation from the female/inferior, male/superior symbolization is counteracted by the redundant interaction pattern of males making and females accepting

decisions. Sexist interaction and symbols are "institutionalized" (expected and sanctioned) in our society. Thus, sexism is spread and perpetuated through communication in the form of sexist interaction systems and sexist symbol systems manifested in interaction systems.

The redundancy of "institutionalized" sexist interaction and symbol systems serves as negative feedback cycles because this redundancy counteracts deviancy from the established norms of these systems. Thus, through negative feedback cycles, sexist interaction and symbol systems are maintained. The operation of sexist negative feedback cycles within society's formal institutions reflects the semi-permanent status of sexism in our society. For instance, in American society's formal institution of the church, the redundant symbolization and behavior of the female is inferior sinner and follower, whereas the redundant symbolization and behavior of the male is superior savior and leader.[10]

In summary, sexist interaction occurs in a system of behaviors. The structure of sexist interaction systems functions to define a female/inferior, male/superior relationship. Hierarchically, sexist interaction systems are interdependent with their environing system--sexist symbol systems. Sexism is perpetuated because deviation from institutionalized sexist interaction and symbol systems is counteracted by negative feedback cycles.

Sexism As A Disease

Sexist interaction and symbol systems, like all open systems, are characterized by equifinality and are therefore capable of self-determination. Bertalanffy points out (unfortunately in male generic terms) that autonomous systems do not always function to human benefit: "Owing to their immanent dynamics or laws, symbolic systems may become more potent than man, their creator. Then, symbolic entities--status, nation, society, party, what have you--may govern man and human behavior more strongly than biological reality or organismic drives."[11] Whatever the "original" (admittedly an arbitrary point) composition and function of gender-based interaction and symbol systems, these systems have autonomously evolved to their present form and are now governing human behavior (through redundancy) "more strongly than biological reality or organismic drives." Thus, sexism is a disease on our society because it is based on autonomous interaction and symbol systems rather than biological facts.[12] Some of the manifestations of this disease include double binds and limited adaptability.

Sexism creates a societal situation of double bind by institutionalizing contradictory social norms. The definitional criteria set by Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson[13] for a double bind are met by present sexist interaction and symbol systems: (1) "Intense relationship." Everyone has a sex role (female or male); interaction with everyone (strangers and intimates) is based on our sexist symbols. Therefore, sex roles are involved in our intense relationships. (2) "A message is given which is so structured that (a) it asserts something, (b) it asserts something about its own assertion, and (c) these two assertions are mutually exclusive." Such messages occur in sexist systems due to the division of symbol systems into symbols of what a female is, what a male is, and what a person is. Thus, a double-binding

message for a female in our society would be (a) females should be dependent, (b) people should support themselves, and (c) dependency and independency are mutually exclusive.[14] For instance, a woman who decides to be independent and support herself is told she is taking a job away from a man who has to support a family and she is accused of being an aggressive bitch (not dependent). On the other hand, a woman who depends on a male is "worthless" in a society where worth is often measured monetarily and she is accused of being a spendthrift with "her husband's" money (not independent). A double-binding message for a male would be (a) males should be tough, (b) people should be tender, and (c) tough and tender are mutually exclusive. For example, a man who decides to be tough and "prove he is a man" is accused of being cold, unscrupulous, and mean (not tender). Conversely, a man who is a humanist and behaves in a tender manner is accused of not having any "balls," being incompetent, and effeminate (not tough). Such injunctions ". . .must be disobeyed to be obeyed." (3) Individuals are ". . .prevented from stepping outside the frame set by the message." This happens because redundancy (in the form of negative feedback cycles) is counteracting deviation from the established symbol system or frame. Consequently: "A person in a double bind situation is therefore likely to find himself punished (or at least made to feel guilty) for correct perceptions, and defined as 'bad' or 'mad' or even insinuating that there is a discrepancy between what he does see and what he 'should' see. This is the essence of the double bind." An example of the binding quality of sex role double binds in our society is that any woman who does not mold her behavior to fit the stereotyped female role is accused of being an "unnatural woman!" (both "bad" and "mad").[15]

The individual in the double bind is in the untenable position of being "damned if you do and damned if you don't." This leaves her/him very few pragmatic alternatives. Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson (pp. 217-19) outline three possible reactions to this untenable position. These coping behaviors are common in our society.

One possible reaction is to search for clues to give meaning to what is happening. Since what is happening is contradictory, unrelated explanations are necessary. Therefore, a "shift away from the real issues" occurs. An example of such a shift in our society could be the shift from the real issue of why scrubwoman is a female occupation. The shift used to explain this might be: women bear children, therefore they should stay home and raise those children, therefore they should clean the house, therefore women are suited to getting a job as a scrubwoman. (Meaningful, isn't it? "Where is it written that a uterus uniquely qualifies a woman to wield dust mops and wash dishes?"[16]) This shift provides a pseudo-escape from the dependent/independent double bind: the scrubwoman gains the independence implied by depending on a menial job and thus has shifted, but not escaped, the structure of the double bind.

A second possible reaction to the double bind is ". . .to comply with any and all injunctions with complete literalness and to abstain overtly from any independent thinking." An example of this reaction would be that many

men in our society will not allow themselves to cry. The injunction, "Men do not cry," is complied with literally--why doesn't a man cry?--because he is a man! The contradictory injunction, "People should be sensitive," is overtly kept from consideration. In this reaction to the double bind, either injunction can become the focus of compliance. That is, it is also possible that the injunction, "People should be sensitive," may be complied with literally while abstaining overtly from considering the injunction, "Men do not cry." However, a dehumanizing aspect of sex-role double binds is that because sexism is an institutionalized system in our society, choices are more often based on sexist norms rather than individual preference. Therefore, probably more men obey the sexist norm, "Men do not cry," than obey "People should be sensitive."

A third possible behavior used to cope with the double bind is ". . .to withdraw from human involvement." Physical isolation or attempted psychological withdrawal from interaction is one more way people attempt to deal with the paradoxical injunction implicit in present sex-role symbols. An example of attempted withdrawal from human involvement is the rising number of people who are turning to the oblivion of alcohol and drugs. Evidence of this withdrawal occurring in our society is espoused by Salsman-Webb who argues, "When these [sex] roles fail to satisfy, as they do, women resort to the salves of all oppressed groups. They take to drugs and drink, and if they can afford it, to psychiatry."[17]

Double-binding sex-role symbols are not conducive to the health of individuals. In severe cases, double binding is clearly pathogenic: "Where double binding has become the predominant pattern of communication, and where the diagnostic attention is limited to the overtly most disturbed individual, the behavior of this individual will be found to satisfy the diagnostic criteria of schizophrenia."[18] Accordingly, the behavior of those most severely and overtly disturbed by double-binding sex-role symbols possibly may meet the diagnostic criteria of schizophrenia. Admittedly, cases requiring hospitalization would constitute the exception rather than the rule. The extreme is shown, however, to emphasize the potential disease inherent in present sexist symbols. According to Chesler, diseases such as schizophrenia, paranoia, frigidity, and suicide attempts ". . .whether hospitalized or not, constitute female role rituals, enacted by most women."[19] If disease is defined as "unease," the untenable position of sex-role double binds qualify as a disease upon our society even for those who are not severely enough disturbed by them to be hospitalized.

Another reason why sexism is a disease is that it limits the adaptability of people. Redundant sexist interaction and symbol systems constrain deviation from themselves. Although nothing is inherently wrong with constraint (the absence of constraint would be chaos), the important question is whether the systems developed (given a certain set of constraints) will function to human benefit. That is, is valuable information being constrained? As Ashby points out, "Here the situation is dominated by the basic law of requisite variety (and Shannon's Tenth Theorem), which states that the achieving of appropriate selection (to a degree better than chance) is absolutely dependent on the processing of at least that quantity of information."[20] Therefore, decisions based on sexist interaction and symbol systems can be no more appropriate than

the information contained in those systems (unconstrained). Much information valuable to human adaptation is constrained by our present sexist interaction and symbol systems. For instance, the information that no difference in intellectual capacity can be proven to exist between females and males is constrained from sexist interaction and symbol systems by the redundant interaction "programs" and symbols of males as intellectually superior to females. (Have you ever heard of a male "dumb blonde"?) Such information which may be useful for human adaptation is not available for processing. Thus, sexism limits people's adaptability by constraining information potentially useful to their adaptation. This unhealthy limitation is another criterion for viewing sexism as a disease.

The disease of sexism is perpetuated through "institutionalized" wholistic interaction and symbol systems. Viewing sexism as a disease in a systemic sense, if it affects one part, it necessarily, by definition, affects the whole. Therefore, our whole society is infected with the disease of sexism.

Implications For Change

Although it cannot be said from a systemic perspective that X strategy will produce Y effect, this perspective's search for "global laws" governing the operation of systems can hopefully demonstrate how systems are maintained and how they may change, while still remaining true to the complexity of the communication process. Hopefully, the present discussion of the maintenance of sexism through communication and the implementation of a nonsexist society through communication demonstrates the applicability of a systemic perspective of communication to planned, directed change.

An understanding of the disease of sexism and how it functions provides insight into a possible method for curing sexism. Since this disease is spread and maintained through communication, a possible method for remedying it would be an evolved substitution of new nonsexist systems for present sexist systems. Through communication the present structure and function of sexist systems can evolve into nonsexist systems. If sexism is the institutionalization of interaction and symbol systems based on gender, the absence of sexism would be the replacement of such systems based on gender by interaction and symbol systems based on personhood. This would entail the merging of symbol systems defining "what a female is" and "what a male is" to form a single non-gender based symbol system defining "what a person is." Interaction systems reflecting this new symbol system would define a new relationship between participating communicants: a non-gender based relationship, rather than the female/inferior, male/superior relationship, would develop. Sexist interaction and symbol systems are maintained through communication; an attack on these systems must also come through communication.

Since interaction and symbol systems are interdependent, the most thorough course of action would be to attack both levels. These systems, being wholistic and equifinal, should not be attacked using a linear cause-effect design however. Mutual causality operates within these systems, and therefore the outcome of the introduction of change into these systems is unpredictable. Any attempts to change sexist interaction and symbol systems can only be based on "transitional probabilities"[21] and must, therefore, be employed on a short-term, flexibile, adaptive basis. Illustrating the need for flexibility when attempting to

introduce and direct change is the following hypothetical situation: Suppose a group of women wish to change sexist wage and promotion practices in a particular corporation. It would be convenient for them to reason, "If we storm the office of the president of the corporation and demand nonsexism be implemented, then the president will change the sexist practices." However, linearly causal if-then strategies are not sufficient to deal with the mutually causal system the women wish to change. The "then" part of the strategy is unpredictable from the initial components of the situation. The women's storming behavior may be followed by any of a number of behaviors by the corporation. For instance, the president may ignore the women, call the police, co-opt the demands, beg for mercy, fire the women, or implement nonsexist practices. For this reason, these women must be flexible enough to act upon whatever new situation occurs. This qualification of flexibility must be kept in mind on all aspects of the following method for remedying sexism.

Positive feedback cycles amplifying deviation from sexist interaction and symbol systems must be introduced. For example, deviation from sexist interaction systems could be amplified by individuals refraining from molding their behavior into "mutually recognizable and predictable" sex roles. If women consistently open doors for themselves, the sexist interaction pattern of "superior males open doors for inferior females" will no longer be the norm. Deviation from this norm could also be amplified by males refraining from opening doors for females. Deviation from sexist symbol systems could be amplified through metacommunicating about sex roles (e.g. consciousness-raising sessions or this article) or rhetorical events (e.g. the protest of the Miss American Pageant in Atlantic City in September 1968.[22]) Sexist interaction and symbol systems could be formally attacked by deviating from the norms of formal institutions that reflect sexism. For instance, the Equal Rights Amendment attacks the sexist hiring, promotion, and salary practices of the formal institution of American business by advocating compulsory nonsexist practices.

Such positive feedback cycles are useful in amplifying previously counteracted deviation from sexist norms. A great amount of amplification of deviation from these norms would involve a crisis period for the established sexist structure. A crisis period is useful in the implementation of change because new (nonsexist) norms may be agreed to more readily in an attempt to restore stability to the system. However, those who are attempting to direct the change must be especially flexible and be willing to take large risks during a crisis period because rapid, gross, and unpredictable changes are likely to occur in such an unstable system.

Positive feedback cycles unstructure sexist interaction and symbol systems by deviating from their established norms. When these nonsexist deviations become redundant they become the new norm and serve as negative feedback cycles counteracting deviation from themselves. Hence, society is restructured according to these nonsexist norms and once again operates on a relatively stable, steady state. In this new structure of society, non-gender based communication would be the redundant interaction "program"; symbols based on

personhood, rather than gender, would be the redundant symbolization of people. Then, nonsexist norms could be considered as being "institutionalized" in this society. The redundancy of nonsexist interaction and symbol systems within our formal institutions would formalize the semi-permanence of sexual equality in this society. For example, nonsexist norms in society's formal institution of the church would not associate a gender with the behaviors and symbolizations of sinner, savior, follower, and leader.

In summary, sexist interaction and symbol systems could evolve into new structures that do not function according to gender. Such an evolution would require an understanding of the "global laws" of systems: due to their interdependence, both the microsystem (sexist interaction systems) and the macrosystems (sexist symbol systems) should be attacked; this intervention would consist of the introduction and eventual redundancy of positive feedback cycles amplifying deviation from sexist norms; such an attack, however, must recognize the wholistic, mutually causal, equifinal, self-determining characteristics of an open system and, therefore, be flexibly based on "transitional probabilities."

This new, nonsexist structure of society would eliminate double-binding sex-role injunctions and would make available previously constrained information which is valuable to individuals' adaptation to society. The autonomous sexist interaction and symbol systems would be actively changed by those who were perpetuating them and the disease they entail. Thus, the disease of sexism could be treated. Certainly the new nonsexist interaction and symbol systems would function autonomously also, as all open systems do, and would therefore necessitate periodic re-evaluation of their evolved forms. A system should contain all possible information valuable to the adaptation of those who maintain the system. No system should be perpetuated simply because it exists, but only as long as it continues to benefit those who maintain it.[23] Do you want to perpetuate a sick society?

Notes

[1] The terms "interaction" and "communication" are used synonomously in this article

[2] This application of general system theory to communication is largely based on a convention paper by B. Aubrey Fisher, "Paradigms of Communication" (Western Speech Comm. Assn., 1974), pp. 5-8, 11.

[3] A. D. Hall and R. E. Fagen, "Definition of System," in General Systems Yearbook, 1 (1956), pp. 18-28. Many of the concepts developed in this section concerning systems are according to Hall and Fagen. For an in-depth discussion of systems, see Hall and Fagen.

[4] Paul Watzlawick, Janet Helmick Beavin, and Don D. Jackson, Pragmatics of Human Communication, (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1967), p. 121.

[5] Maurice Mandelbaum, "That There Are, or May Be, Irreducible Social Laws," in The Nature and Scope of Social Science ed. Leonard I. Krimerman, (New York: Appleton, 1969), pp. 645-46.

[6] For a discussion of time as multilayered, see Jiri Kolaja, Social System and Time and Space, (Pittsburg: Duquesne U. Press, 1969).

[7] Ludwig von Bertalanffy, Robots, Men and Minds, (New York: Braziller, 1967), p. 30.

[8] Albert E. Sheflen, "Behavioral Programs in Human Interaction," in General Systems Theory and Psychiatry, ed. William Gray et al., (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969) pp. 210-11.

[9] Talcott Parsons, The Social System, (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), pp. 36-45. Parsons deals with internal states. However, since the perspective of this article is concerned with behavior, these internal states will be dealt with here as they are manifested in observable behavior.

[10] For a more comprehensive discussion of sex roles institutionalized in religion, see Judith Hole and Ellen Levine, Rebirth of Feminism, (New York: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1971), pp. 373-97.

[11] Bertalanffy, p. 31.

[12] For further evidence supporting this position, see Hole, pp. 169-73.

[13] All direct quotations in this paragraph can be found in Watzlawick, pp. 212-15.

[14] This specific contradiction is discussed in greater detail in Matina S. Horner, "Femininity and Successful Achievement: A Basic Inconsistency," in Roles Women Play: Readings Toward Women's Liberation, ed. Michele Hoffnung Garskof (Belmont, Calif.: Brooks/Cole Publ. Co., 1971), pp. 97-102.

[15] For an extended development of this theme, see Phyllis Chesler, Women & Madness, (New York: Avon Books, 1972).

[16] Lucy Komisar, testimony, Green Hearings, p. 423.

[17] Marilyn Salzman-Webb. "Woman as Secretary, Sexpot, Spender, Sow, Civic Actor, Sickie," in Roles Women Play: Readings Toward Women's Liberation, ed. Michele Hoffnung Garskof (Belmont, Calif.: Brooks/Cole Publ. Co., 1971), pp. 20-21.

[18] Watzlawick, pp. 214-15.

[19] Chesler, p. 69.

[20] Ross Ashby, "Principles of Self-Organizing Systems," in Principles of Self-Organization, ed. Heinz von Foerster and George W. Zopf (New York: Pergamon Press, 1962). pp. 255-78.

[21] Fisher, p. 7.

[22] Carol Hanish. "A Critique of the Miss America Pageant," in Voices From Women's Liberation, ed. Leslie B. Tanner (New York: New American Library, 1970), pp. 133-35.

[23] Gratitude is acknowledged to Wayne Brockriede for his substantial criticism of this article.